



What Happens in **VEGAS**

Alumni share tales of living, working
in Entertainment Capital of the World

MSSU forges
partnership
with new **medical**
school
Alum
honored at
White House
ceremony



**SPOKEN LIKE A
TRUE MISSOURIAN:
“In the spring, I have
counted 136 different kinds
of weather inside of 24 hours.”**

- Mark Twain



FROM THE EDITOR



Dear alumni and friends,

The Spring 2016 semester has come to a close, and we're back with another issue of Crossroads magazine.

After a relatively mild winter (bad news for those students who spent several evenings crossing their fingers for a snow day), the campus is once again in full bloom.

Perhaps we were too quick to head west since Old Man Winter appears to have been otherwise occupied. Still, it gave us a chance to catch up with an amazing group of alumni who live and work in Las Vegas, Nevada.

You'll meet Donald Leffert, Robyn Eddy and Erina Parks – theater graduates who have given their time and talents to help bring Cirque du Soleil's spectacular "Zarkana" to life. You'll also get to know Kevin Hooks, president and CEO of the Las Vegas Urban League, as well as actor and martial arts icon Jeff Speakman.

It's a refrain you'll be hearing more from us, but it's absolutely true: You can find a Lion anywhere!

Elsewhere in this issue, you'll learn about a research project that has utilized a drone to get a bird's eye view of the area's mining history, get a preview of the upcoming Great Britain Semester, and find out about an exciting partnership with Kansas City University's new Joplin campus.

As always, when you see this symbol –  – be sure to visit our online edition for additional content, videos, photos and more. You can find us online at crossroads.mssu.edu.

Most importantly, we want to hear from you! If you have feedback on a story, a feature idea, photo or favorite memory, drop us a line at crossroads@mssu.edu.

Have a great summer!

Editor
Crossroads Magazine
Missouri Southern State University

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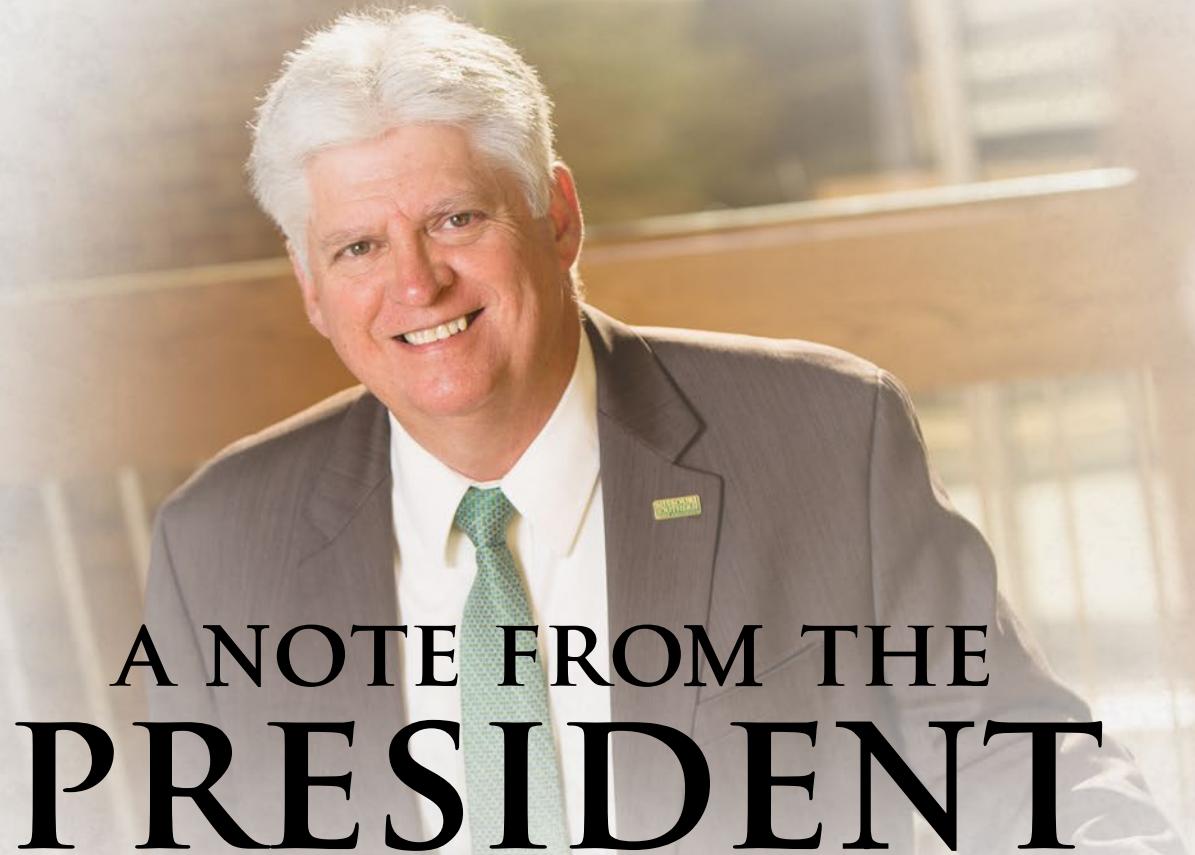
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A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

In the late 1960s, Missouri Southern conferred its first baccalaureate degrees as a four-year college, and in 2003 Governor Holden signed a bill that elevated Missouri Southern to University status. We now offer graduate degrees in addition to our full slate of undergraduate degree programs. We hold tight to our belief that a broad and thorough liberal arts education is essential for the complete development of each student, and we will remain true to that foundation going forward.

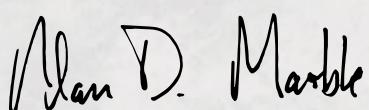
However, it is not in our nature to stand still. Now, to keep progressing, we must reach for an even higher bar. We must fully assume the obligations of teaching, service and research that are the hallmarks of truly being a “university.”

With our great history in mind, a primary goal is to continue to meet the learning needs of our community. These begin with dual credit classes for high-school students and extend through associate, baccalaureate and graduate degrees to facilitate personal and professional career development for each life we touch. Beyond that, we must provide lifelong learning experiences for the collective benefit of alumni, businesses and members of our community in general.

In terms of service, we must diffuse our focus into the broader region. To progress, our faculty must be involved as peer reviewers, journal editors, conference participants and leaders in local, regional and national organizations.

Finally, there is scholarship. The time has come to assume the obligation of becoming a university that is engaged in research and learning through discovery. This will demand intellectual contributions on the part of our faculty members that will be discussed, replicated and built upon by other scholars and students nationally and even globally.

In the coming years, Missouri Southern can and must become an institution more fully connected to scholarship in every sense of the word. We must take our place in the global dialogue in all areas of educational engagement and take the lead where opportunities arise. Our faculty members are some of the best in the profession, and I know we are up to the challenge. The future of Missouri Southern State University is bright and filled with promise!



Dr. Alan Marble, '79
President
Missouri Southern State University

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CELEBRATING OUR ENROLLMENT SUCCESSES



I often receive questions from alumni, contributors and others in the community concerning enrollment and the new students we attract to Missouri Southern each year. How many have enrolled? Where are they from? What is the average ACT score of entering freshmen?

Enrollment has grown since the devastating May 2011 tornado. This spring, we experienced a 3.9% increase to 5,267 students as well as a 2.8% increase in credit hours generated. We also saw growth in the following areas:

- 26% more graduate students
- 21.4% more new transfer students
- 10.8% more international students
- 23.4% more dual credit/enrollment students

It was a continuation of the upward enrollment trends we experienced in the Fall 2015 semester, as well. Some of those highlights included:

- A 3.03% increase in enrollment to 5,783 students
- A 2.93% increase in credit hours generated
- An 8% increase in the number of new freshman (925 students) - one of the largest classes in history
- A record number of new transfer students (652) representing a 12.2% increase
- A record number of international students (217) representing an 11.4% increase
- Students from 42 states and 40 countries
- 80% of new freshmen from 63 counties in Missouri (one-third from Jasper County)
- Crowder College remains top feeder school for new transfer students

Each year, the Admissions Office establishes recruitment and enrollment goals for our entering class of new freshman and transfer students. Early admission data indicates we should have another strong class this fall, and it makes us proud that so many students are choosing Missouri Southern to achieve their higher education goals.

With Lion Pride,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derek S. Skaggs".

Derek S. Skaggs
Director of Admissions



AROUND CAMPUS



Missouri Southern partners with KCU for 'Yours to Lose'

A historic partnership between Missouri Southern State University and the Kansas City University (KCU) was formalized during a recent signing ceremony.

The "Yours to Lose – Advanced Medical School Acceptance Program" will allow up to 25 Missouri Southern students to be admitted into KCU's new medical school when they are accepted to MSSU.

KCU will open a new medical school in August 2017, and will enroll 150 students in the inaugural class. It will be located in Mercy Hospital Joplin's former component hospital at 2817 St. Johns Blvd.

Dr. Paula Carson, Missouri Southern's provost/vice president for academic affairs, said the exclusive partnership will allow Missouri Southern to focus on helping students develop the work ethic and critical-thinking skills needed to be better medical students and, ultimately, better physicians.

"This partnership is allowing us to come up with innovative curricular ideas to ensure our students are in the best possible position to succeed," said Carson.

"We can start preparing them for what medical school will be like. We'll have a rigorous curriculum and non-traditional scheduling of courses that will better resemble the calendar and schedule of medical education. We can also focus some of our courses on specific skills students will need in this unique profession – such as developing a communication class with an emphasis on non-verbal communication and 'bedside manner.'"

A number of high schools from Missouri - as well as several in Kansas, Arkansas and Oklahoma - have been tabbed as "Yours to Lose" partner schools.

With work underway to prepare Mercy Hospital Joplin's former component hospital to house the new medical school, efforts are in full swing at



Missouri Southern to meet the needs of students entering medical and science-related fields.

As the Spring 2016 semester began, students who ordinarily would have had classes on the third floor of Reynolds Hall found a new home in the Reynolds Annex building, located on the southwest side of campus.

The annex will serve as a transitional space while Reynolds Hall is renovated.

Last year, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon announced his support for funding that will allow for the renovation of Reynolds Hall (the second oldest building on campus), which houses the biology, environmental health, physical science and mathematics programs. House Bill 19 will provide \$5.2 million for the project, while House Bill 17 contains an additional \$1.5 million, which will be matched by private contributions from alumni and other sources.

“Right now, the third floor of Reynolds is empty,” said Rob Yust, vice president for business affairs. “We did light demo work during the spring semester and will be doing heavy demolition prior to the start of summer classes.

“Hopefully by this time next year, we’ll be able to utilize the third floor and then empty the first floor for the same sort of process.”

While that work continues, students and faculty are being housed in the new annex. The 15 mobile units that make up the building were delivered to campus after being purchased from the State Emergency Management Agency, said Bob Harrington, director of the Physical Plant at Missouri Southern. They had previously been used by Joplin High School following the May 22, 2011, tornado.



The annex was completed over Christmas break with the delivery of cabinets, tables, lab equipment and supplies from Reynolds Hall.

Yust said Missouri Southern is already looking beyond the renovations in Reynolds Hall when it comes to uses for the annex.

“Once work in Reynolds is complete and everybody is out of the annex into their permanent home, it can be used for other purposes,” he said. “We’ll always need transition areas for classes and to make room for further expansion.”



Oplotnik

Oplotnik joins Board of Governors

In January, Anita Y. Oplotnik was appointed to the Missouri Southern State University Board of Governors by Gov. Jay Nixon.

Oplotnik is a branch manager in Springfield for the financial advisor firm Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, and has been with the firm since 2005. Prior to that, she was with Bank of America in Springfield from 1989 to 2005.

She obtained her bachelor’s degree from Missouri Southern and her MBA in finance from Missouri State University.

Teacher Education program first to meet new standards

Missouri’s Southern’s Teacher Education Department is the first program in the Show-Me state to meet newer, tougher standards for re-accreditation by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

A CAEP team started its review of the program last fall by making an on-site visit to MSSU. The reviewers visited with stakeholders in the teacher preparation program – area school administrators, teachers, graduates, current students and campus personnel.

This visit was a joint accreditation review by CAEP and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The program also received full approval from DESE to continue to offer certification programs.

Dr. Deborah Brown, dean of the School of Education, says being the first in the state to meet these vigorous, more robust standards “is a big deal, and we are very proud of all those involved for making this a great program. It takes a team effort to prepare the best possible teachers for the students in the classrooms of the region.”

AROUND CAMPUS

continued

Show-Me Gold celebrates first commissioned officer

Missouri Southern's Show-Me Gold officer training program has graduated its first commissioned officer.

Josh Turner, a general studies major from Carthage, graduated this May as a second lieutenant in the Missouri Army National Guard, which partners with Show-Me Gold for the program.

Now in its third year, the program consists of classroom instruction, physical training and leadership laboratories. In addition to taking regular classes at the university, officer candidates take military-science courses and fulfill other requirements through the National Guard.

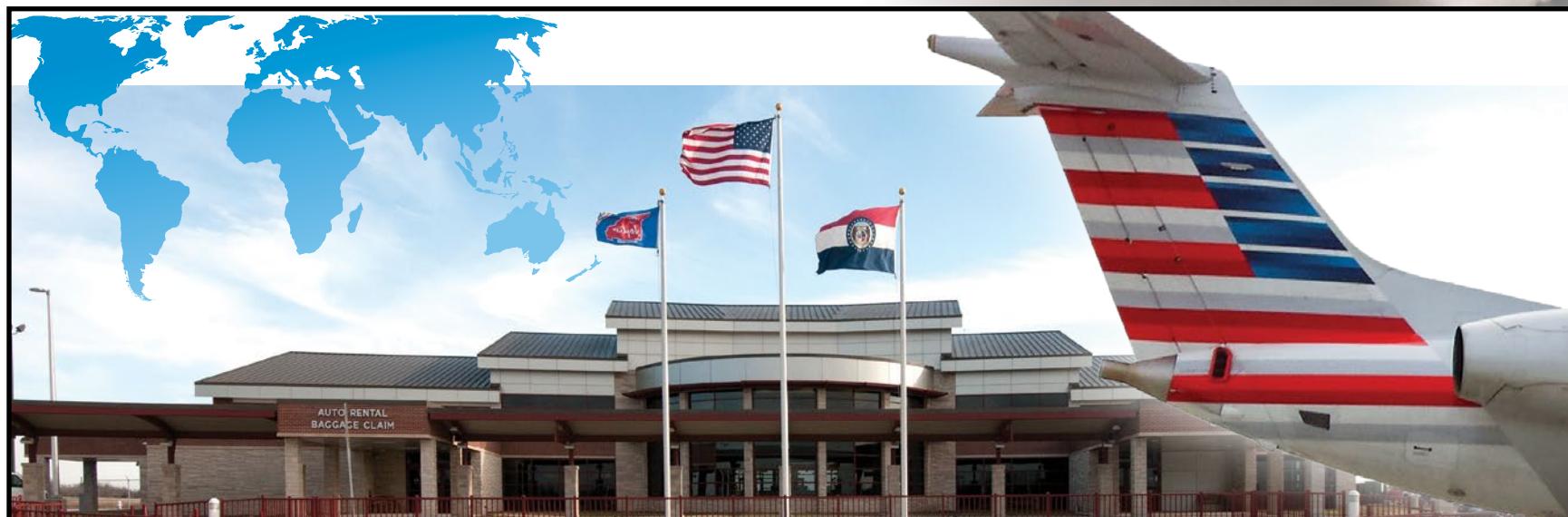
Last year, Turner graduated from Officer Candidate School, which included a stint at Fort Meade, S.D., and several weeks at Camp Rapid in Rapid City. A graduation ceremony was held at the foot of Mount Rushmore.

"Josh's commissioning is a milestone for the program," said Capt. Chase Phillips, professor of military science and coordinator of the Show-Me Gold program. "It's an achievement that represents years of hard work."

Phillips said Turner will soon have others following in his footsteps. Four more officer candidates are expected to be commissioned over the summer, with another 12 next year.



Turner



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THE BRITISH ARE COMING!



Southern to celebrate the Great Britain Semester this fall

By Dr. Chad Stebbins, Director, Institute of International Studies

Missouri Southern will celebrate the Great Britain Semester in Fall 2016 – our 20th themed semester since the program began in 1997 with the China Semester.

As was the case with our Fall 2015 Spain Semester, **MSSU faculty** again will make several presentations. They include:

- **Dr. Rebecca Mouser**, assistant professor of English, on medieval manuscripts and her experience with making parchment.
- **Dr. Vickie Roettger**, chair of the Department of Biology and Environmental Health, on Charles Darwin (she will even dress up as Mrs. Darwin).
- **Dr. Michael Howarth**, director of the Honors Program, on Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho" on Halloween morning.
- **Dr. Michael Hulderman**, chair of the Criminal Justice Administration department, on Jack the Ripper and the case of Colin Pitchfork (the first murder conviction based on DNA profiling evidence).
- **Dr. Nicolas Nicoletti**, assistant professor of political science, on Great Britain's role and relationship with the European Union.
- **Dr. Paul Teverow**, professor of history, on the origins and significance of Magna Carta.
- **Dr. Conrad Gubera**, professor of sociology and international studies, on the Cotswolds and Warwick Castle.



Faculty from other universities also will make valuable contributions to the Great Britain Semester schedule:



- **Dr. Gregory Jones**, chair of the Department of Music at Indiana University Purdue University, on the British Invasion, British music and the social influences that spawned the counterculture.
- **Dr. James Williams**, executive director of the National Churchill Museum and professor of Churchill Studies at Westminster College in Fulton, Mo., on Winston Churchill, and on Churchill's 1946 visit to Fulton and the creation of the National Churchill Museum.
- **Dr. David Gutze**, professor of history at Missouri State University, on pubs and their role in British culture, and on how beer, national identity and football shaped the culture of sport.
- **Dr. Felicia Londré**, professor of theatre at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, on the Shakespeare authorship question.

Missouri Southern's Music Department will be heavily involved as well, with the Southern Symphony Orchestra (directed by Dr. Jeff Macomber), the MSSU Wind Ensemble (directed by Dr. Rick Espinosa), Dr. Jordan Wilson and Dr. Cheryl Cotter all planning performances or recitals. Southern Theatre will also present a play from Great Britain.

Finally, 11 British films will be shown as part of the Harrison and June Kash International Film Society series, starting with "A Hard Day's Night" on Aug. 23. All showings will be at 7 p.m. Tuesdays in Cornell Auditorium.

A complete schedule of events will be available in late June at www.mssu.edu/greatbritain.

Looking to the future

Alexandra Starks, Saif Farag selected as 2015-16 Outstanding Graduates

Having already crossed the stage during December commencement exercises, **Alexandra Starks** and **Saif Farag** have been selected as the Outstanding Graduates for the 2015-16 school year.

Beyond Missouri Southern, both have big dreams for the future.

When Starks was applying for graduate schools, she read up on the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, learning that the school is widely considered one of the best universities in the world.

“It was a shoot-for-the-stars situation,” she said of applying to the school. It wasn’t long before she learned that her application had been accepted.

Starks, who graduated in December with a degree in international studies, will pursue her master of science degree in global health and public policy at the prestigious university in the fall.

“I haven’t been to Scotland before, so the first time will be when I move there,” says Starks. “I’m really looking forward to it.”

She’s currently getting hands-on training in her field of interest as a client services intern with Amaanah Refugee Services in Houston, Texas.

* * *

At an age when many students are preparing for their freshman year of college, 18-year-old Farag is applying for medical school after recently completing his degree in biology.

He enrolled at Missouri Southern at age 15, after graduating from high school in Norcross, Ga.

“It was something else,” he said of starting college at such a young age. “It was hard to get accustomed to it ... I felt like I was playing catch-up. But by the time I was 17 I felt like I had the hang of it.”

“I appreciated how helpful the professors were and that they didn’t make a big deal out of how old I was.”



Farag

Starks

While at Missouri Southern, Farag stayed busy with Student Senate, Student Ambassadors, the Biology Club, Campus Activities Board and a number of other organizations.

Farag has his eyes set on joining the inaugural class when the Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences opens its medical school campus in Joplin in 2017.

“Applications are opening soon,” he said. “I live here in Joplin, so I’ll find a job until I start there, hopefully, next fall.”



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There is no off switch on the Vegas Strip.

Visit this incredible city for just 24 hours, and you'll see that the lights, music, gaming tables and buffets are there for the taking, no matter the time of day. Vegas has a population of more than 600,000 - but that number is dwarfed by the millions of visitors who flock there each year.

Let us introduce you to five Missouri Southern graduates whose different journeys led them to successful careers in the Entertainment Capital of the World.

It just goes to show,
you can find a Lion anywhere.





**Donald
Leffert, '04**



**Erina
Parks, '04**



**Kevin
Hooks, '92**



**Jeff
Speakman, '83**

'Making MAGIC happen'

Three Missouri Southern grads work behind the scenes for **Cirque du Soleil's 'Zarkana'**

Two clowns bumble their way across the theater, eliciting laughter as they climb – or, more accurately, stumble – over the seated audience members as they make their way toward the stage.

As the lights go down and the production begins, the characters and audience are transported to a circus that springs to life following the discovery of an abandoned theater. It's a fantastical celebration of talented performers, backed by dazzling lights, sound and music.

Wire walkers jump over one another as a flaming pendulum swings directly in their path.

Two performers gripping aerial straps fly across the stage and out over the audience as they execute complex maneuvers.

Others climb on, in and around the "Wheel of Death," a giant spinning contraption that appears it could certainly live up to its name.

As the audience is transported into the world of Cirque du Soleil's "Zarkana" at the Aria Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, it would be easy to overlook that the magic happening on stage is only possible through the magic that takes place behind the scenes.

"It's kind of like a symphony. Everybody plays a part, from on stage to off stage," says Erina Parks, lead wardrobe attendant for "Zarkana" and an '04 graduate of Missouri Southern's theater department. "You have to know not only what your job is, but what other people are doing. There's orchestration to everything, even backstage. It's a crazy kind of game we play."

Parks is one of three Missouri Southern alumni – along with Donald Leffert and his wife, Robyn Eddy, both '04 graduates – who make the technical magic happen for the production. Their journey to the Vegas Strip is one that started while forging friendships and relationships as they learned their craft and made their mark during Southern Theatre productions.

FOCUSING THEIR TALENTS

Originally from Jefferson City, Donald Leffert remembers his high-school drama teacher pointing out a poster for scholarships available at Missouri Southern. He put a portfolio together and interviewed for a scholarship with the Theater Department.

"My emphasis was in lighting at the time, but because the department encouraged you to have a well-rounded degree, I started doing acting in children's shows and directing here and there for the classroom."

"There was lots of hands-on work. It was 'Here's the classroom, here's the theory, go practice, go play.' It was a wonderful, safe place to make an error, learn from your mistakes and grow from there."

Robyn Eddy transferred to Missouri Southern in 2002.

"I was really into set design at my previous college, but most of our sets were designed by our technical director," she says. "I met this really cool guy at summer stock who told me how most of the productions at Missouri Southern were student-designed."

"I visited the campus, met the faculty and transferred that year. I participated in pretty much all the shows in some capacity, whether performing or back stage. It turns out I'm awful at set design, so I used my time at Southern to focus on my talents and figure out where to best put my energy."

Parks transferred to Southern in 2001 as a communication major along with her cousin, who joined the women's basketball team.

"When I started, I took theater as a prerequisite class," she says. "I liked it, but as time went by, things changed. I stuck with the Theater Department to help out with shows and decided to change my major."

The three became friends both in and out of the classroom, but their passion was always taking things to the next level when it came to staging productions.





"They were fun. They always wanted to go past what we did in the classroom and learn more," says Sam Claussen, professor emeritus who served as a teacher and mentor to all three former students.

"Robyn was a performer back then, Erina was always working in the costume shop and Donald was all about doing the lights. They all wanted to learn more and more."

THE ROAD TO CIRQUE

After graduating in 2004, Leffert was offered a job as technical director and production manager for a theater in Charlottesville, Va. While there, the idea of moving to Vegas and getting a job with Cirque du Soleil began to take hold.

Cirque, which got its start more than 30 years ago with a group of street performers, has become a global entertainment organization. It has performed shows for more than 155 million people in more than 40 countries, according to press materials.

"Cirque has an otherworldliness about it," says Eddy. "They tend to be on the brink of new innovations ... that to me is part of the ethos that drew me to it."

Without a safety net beneath them, the couple made the move and began applying for positions.

Leffert got his start in Vegas as a stagehand for a production at another hotel before being hired by Cirque as a part-time electrician for "O" at The Bellagio. The aquatic-based production meant that he had to be able to pass a swim test and complete training as a rescue diver.

He was later hired as assistant head of lighting for "Zarkana," a show which puts the spotlight on a variety of traditional circus performers. "My job entails managing the crew, keeping the artistic vision of the show up and running and assisting the artistic side as changes are made to the show," he says.

"A lot of the acrobats have specific things they need so they can focus on their routine, and the audience needs to be able to see them. There's a lot of balance between what they need technically and what we can provide to make that work."

Eddy initially joined the Cirque production "Kà" as a "gatekeeper" – which is best described as an usher/character – and continued there for three years before moving to the "Viva Elvis" production at the Aria to work in wardrobe. When "Zarkana" opened three years later, she moved to the props department to serve as the show's props lead.

"I'm the go-to person for the props department," she says. "Anything an artist carries in their hands or a set piece that helps decorate the stage is considered a prop. We're here to fix it, clean it, repair it, make it better, make it pretty."

"Just like it's choreographed on stage, it's choreographed backstage. We go through training to get the rhythm and timing of the different acts, so we can get our rhythm and timing down for where we need to be to support them as best we can."

Parks began her Cirque experience nine years ago working for "The Beatles LOVE" at The Mirage before moving to the Aria for "Viva Elvis."

"'Zarkana' moved in a short time later and Elvis left the building," she says. "I did not leave the building."

As the lead wardrobe attendant, Parks leads a team that handles dressing and costumes.

"We have a map for the artists and for every technical department that shows where people are going to be, where they're coming from and who is dressing who. If there's an emergency, I run to make sure the show's integrity stays the same."

MOVING ON

What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas ... but it's not an expression that refers to the ever-changing slate of shows and attractions in the "Entertainment Capital of the World."

On April 30, "Zarkana" took its final bow at the Aria. Set pieces, props and other items went into storage. The Aria plans to demolish the theater to create a new convention center.

Leffert will move to Cirque's "Michael Jackson ONE" production at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, where he'll serve as the show's lead effects technician.

"Lasers, flames, pyro ... all that stuff will fall under my umbrella," he says. "I had to take a lot of classes to get certification for the laser operations. You have to continually learn your craft."

Eddy is unsure of her next move, but Parks says her journey will take a different path.

"My dad owns a food truck in Kentucky, so I'm going to spend time with him and learn his business," she says. "It will be a nice break from what I normally do and a chance to learn about myself again."

"But I definitely want to come back and be a part of it ... maybe work on a tour with Cirque or a Broadway company."

Fifteen years after transferring to Missouri Southern, the "solid training" she received as a theater major has served her well in a city where she never imagined she would live and work. The lights, the glitz and glamour of the Strip ... you just have to keep it in perspective, she says.

"For the people coming (to Vegas), it's fascinating," says Parks. "For us, it's our passion but it's also our job ... making magic happen every single day."

"We're not rocket scientists, we're not here to save the world. We're just here to entertain." 

PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY

Kevin Hooks, '92, offers others a hand up as president of the Las Vegas Urban League



Kevin Hooks isn't one for modest goals when it comes to his position as president and CEO of the Las Vegas Urban League.

"I literally want to eradicate poverty from the state of Nevada," he says. "I want to show that you can make a huge dent in poverty just by people caring and giving back ... that an organization at the tip of the spear can solve problems."

Hooks, who graduated from Missouri Southern in '92, has led the organization for the last three years, growing it into a \$30 million operation that serves nearly 300,000 people across the Nevada basin. The Urban League works with veterans, low-income residents, people who are transitioning out of the prison system and others in order to "bring about opportunity and enable citizens to secure economic self-reliance."

Services offered include GED support, helping clients attend community college to learn a trade, teaching applications and interview skills.

Clients also receive support through literacy, child development and financial empowerment programs, among many others.

"We teach them the responsibility of 'an honest day's work equals an honest day's pay,'" says Hooks. "We let employers know that you can be as good an employee and as helpful to their bottom line as anyone, regardless of the mistakes you made in the past. As long as we both hold up our end of the bargain, we have productive members of society coming out of these doors."

Helping others make that transition is personal to him – their economic situation is one with which he can relate.

"I didn't choose to grow up in poverty ... it was my reality," says Hooks. "I lived in the projects in Tulsa. Sometimes we didn't have running water, but I knew how to turn it back on by the time I was 8 years old. Same thing with gas and electricity."

By his freshman year of high school, Hooks decided to pick up a sport in order to qualify for a college scholarship.

"Football didn't fare so well," he says. "But the soccer coach said, 'You're fast and strong. If you work really hard, I'll give you a shot.'"

By the time he was a junior, Hooks was rated the No. 1 outside defender in the state. He attended Missouri Southern on a soccer scholarship and played for four years.

"After about a year, I had transitioned from a poor kid from the hood into a college student," he says. "I stayed and worked in the summers in Joplin because it was more comfortable to me at that point. I knew I didn't want to be poor anymore."

After graduating from Missouri Southern with a degree in communication, he worked for State Farm for six years before moving to Los Angeles and becoming involved with entertainment marketing.

"I worked in the entertainment business doing product placement ... we were one of the early pioneers as it transitioned into branded entertainment," says Hooks. "I got to work on a lot of very cool shows. They'd pay us a small retainer and we'd throw a bunch of products in film and television productions and hope something stuck. It went from that to high-negotiation deals, with millions changing hands as it became all about incorporating the messaging of the brand into a storyline."

"I literally want to eradicate poverty from the state of Nevada."

A member of the Urban League's board at the national level since 1997, Hooks says he jumped at the chance to bring his business acumen to the table when the position opened with the Las Vegas organization.

"If you look at the numbers and operations of any business, you're going to find opportunities," he says. "I brought a lot of Hollywood and corporate relationships to this conversation, but also a history of success."

More than one acquaintance thought it was "silly" for him to leave Hollywood for the position.

But as he shares some of the success stories of the individuals who have found jobs or gotten back on their feet through the assistance of the Las Vegas Urban League, it's clear he's extremely passionate about his role.

"I'm here doing this because it's important."



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LOCAL NEWS

A FIGHTING SPIRIT

A conversation with actor/martial artist **Jeff Speakman, '83**



Jeff Speakman, a 1983 Missouri Southern graduate who has a studio in Las Vegas, oversees Kenpo 5.0 karate franchise schools in 20 countries.

The Chicago native has been featured in 10 films, including 1991's "The Perfect Weapon," and has another in the works.

One of the most popular martial artists in the world, he has 9th degree black belts in American Kenpo karate and Japanese Goju Ryu. His non-profit Champions Foundation helps underprivileged children in the U.S., Bolivia, Mexico, Germany, Australia and Chile.

Speakman recently discussed his passion for Kenpo, his battle with cancer and his efforts to make the world a better place.

You grew up in Chicago. Why did you choose Missouri Southern for college?

"The family of one of my closest friends in high school had bought a small ranch in Anderson. My friend said, 'Come live with me, go to Southern.' I looked into it, it worked, so I went. I have nothing but good memories of my time at Missouri Southern."

During your time in Joplin you started martial arts training. How did that happen?

"Again, it was through a link made through a friend. He introduced me to Lou Angel, who was working as a night sergeant for the Webb City Police. He began giving me lessons in an abandoned jail cell in the basement of the police department. One light bulb hanging from a cord in the ceiling, concrete walls."

In 1983 you hit the road for L.A. where you met Ed Parker. How important was he to your career?

“Extremely important. I moved to California to study Kenpo with him. I sold my car, paid for a U-Haul and handed him a letter of recommendation from Lou Angel.

Lou said, ‘If you want to make it in martial arts, study with Ed Parker. He’s the best in the world.’ I eventually became a private student under Mr. Parker, one of only two or three. We became very close. He passed away in Hawaii in 1990.”

You, Bruce Lee and Chuck Norris are mentioned in the same sentence. How do you feel about being held in such great esteem?

“I look at things like the windshield of my car. It is very wide and great for looking forward. I spend very little time looking in the rearview mirror. This has been especially true after being diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer. At that time, I assessed my life. I knew I had helped people, helped kids. I have made a full recovery. Now I am super-motivated to break down barriers and do the best I can. I think I am making a difference in the world. I think I am making the world a better place.”

Did you ever contemplate a career as a movie actor?

“Not at all. It wasn’t on the radar but in California someone from the movie industry met me and encouraged me to study acting. I rejected the idea at first but she came back with the name and number of an acting school. My first weekend in acting class coincided with the opening of Jean-Claude Van Damme’s movie ‘Blood Sport.’ I saw that movie and thought, ‘I can’t wait until people see Kenpo.’ Five years later I became the lead of ‘Perfect Weapon.’

“I have starred in 10 movies and produced three. We are very close right now to getting funding for the next film, which we believe will be the biggest one yet. We’ve been working on it for six years. It takes that long.”

What is special about Kenpo 5.0 karate?

“Well, Ed Parker brought his version of Kenpo from Hawaii in 1954. Its very nature is to evolve and change, not to become obsolete. Old Kenpo had no way to defend yourself on the ground. We felt it needed that component. There was a 3.0 and a 4.0, which was Ed Parker’s version. We adapted all the ground fighting techniques and went to 5.0.”

Jeff Speakman Kenpo 5.0 Karate is truly international, isn’t it?

“We have studios in many different nations. I spend about a quarter of every year overseas teaching seminars. Australia is very strong for Kenpo 5.0. It also has really taken off in New Zealand. The indigenous people there, the Maoris, are traditionally a warrior tribe. They have taken to it like crazy. Bolivia is the center for me for all the South American countries. Later this year, the South American Championships will be held in Bolivia.”



What’s your life away from your career like?

“My entire life has been built around health and fitness. I spend nearly every night teaching in a karate school and spend time every day in the gym. I survived Stage 4 esophageal cancer in 2013. I am dedicated to advancing martial arts in the world. I want to be the best in the world at what I do and that means you largely can do only that.”

“The downside is that I have no children. I have the drive for that and the need to fulfill that but it hasn’t happened. Other than that, it’s a great life. I love my life. I have love and satisfaction from a Kenpo 5.0 family across the world.”

What is the value for adults and children of studying Kenpo 5.0?

“We do have a children’s version of Kenpo at some of our studios but parents should know that it is a very elementary version of the techniques and applications. Children should not be taught the adult version.”

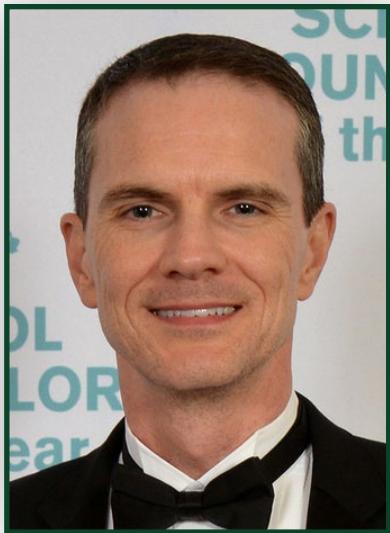
“If you’ve ever seen Kenpo 5.0 for adults, you know that it is extremely punishing and unforgiving. Still, we take the position if you are going to spend the money, time and energy, learn a system that works. A vast majority of martial arts have no practical application. It really is about structure, discipline, respect.”

“That is how we keep the art in martial. There is something today called mixed martial arts but it is anything but. It is just mixed martial fighting.”

“We make sure that wisdom, strength and kindness are always a part of what we teach in addition to structure and discipline. To gain an art, you should make things better, not make things worse.”

To learn more about Jeff Speakman, visit www.jeffspeakman.com





Alum honored at — White House — ceremony

Rob Lundien, '96, recognized as finalist for 2016 School Counselor of the Year

Robert Lundien couldn't help but feel a bit emotional as he was recognized by First Lady Michelle Obama during a White House ceremony in January.

"The young man I brought with me had a front-row seat and you could tell that this was such an incredible experience for him," said

Lundien, a 1996 graduate of Missouri Southern and counselor for Staley High School in Kansas City who was recognized as one of six finalists for the 2016 School Counselor of the Year award. "It brought the whole thing full-circle for me ... that the students were the reason we were there."

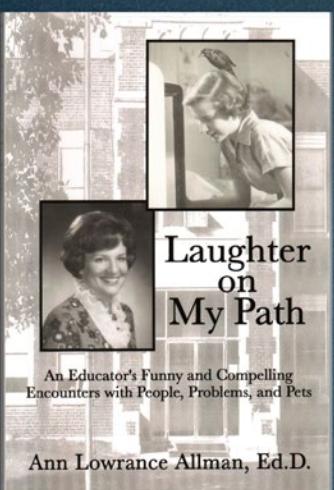
Presented by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the award honors professionals who devote their careers to serving as advocates for the nation's students, helping them achieve success in school and life. The six finalists traveled to Washington, D.C., for three days of events, including visits with their respective state representatives and the ceremony hosted by the First Lady.

After graduating from Missouri Southern with a degree in music education, Lundien's teaching career has included serving as band director at Diamond High School, a counselor for Neosho High School and working in special education for the Webb City School District. He has been with Staley High School for the last seven years.

The awards process began in Lundien's school district, with a nomination from Staley's principal. He was honored by the Greater Kansas City School Counselor Association and was then selected as the Missouri Secondary School Counselor of the Year. Nominations for the national award were then forwarded to the ASCA for consideration.

"The national award looks at how you advocate for your students, but also how you advocate for your profession," said Lundien. "They also look at programs and activities used to help with students' social and emotional well-being and their college readiness."

As part of his visit, he and the other finalists met with state legislators to talk about the counseling profession.



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"We had a chance to sit down and talk about public education and share with them the successes and challenges we see," he said. "It was a great experience."

Michelle Obama recognized each of the six finalists (the award went to Katherine Pastor, from Flagstaff, Ariz.) and thanked them for the work they do each day.

"We (held this ceremony) because we wanted to plant a flag and send a clear message that what you all do isn't a luxury," she said. "It's not an 'extra' – just the opposite. The work that you do is absolutely essential for the future of our kids, the future that we say we want our kids to have."

Each finalist was able to bring a student from their school who has overcome a challenge. Selecting one student was difficult, said Lundien, who wishes he could have brought his entire school.

"The ceremony was part of the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative, which helps kids get to college and have all the support they need," he said. "It was an overwhelming and emotional experience for me."



David Pyle, '97, named Missouri High School Principal of the Year



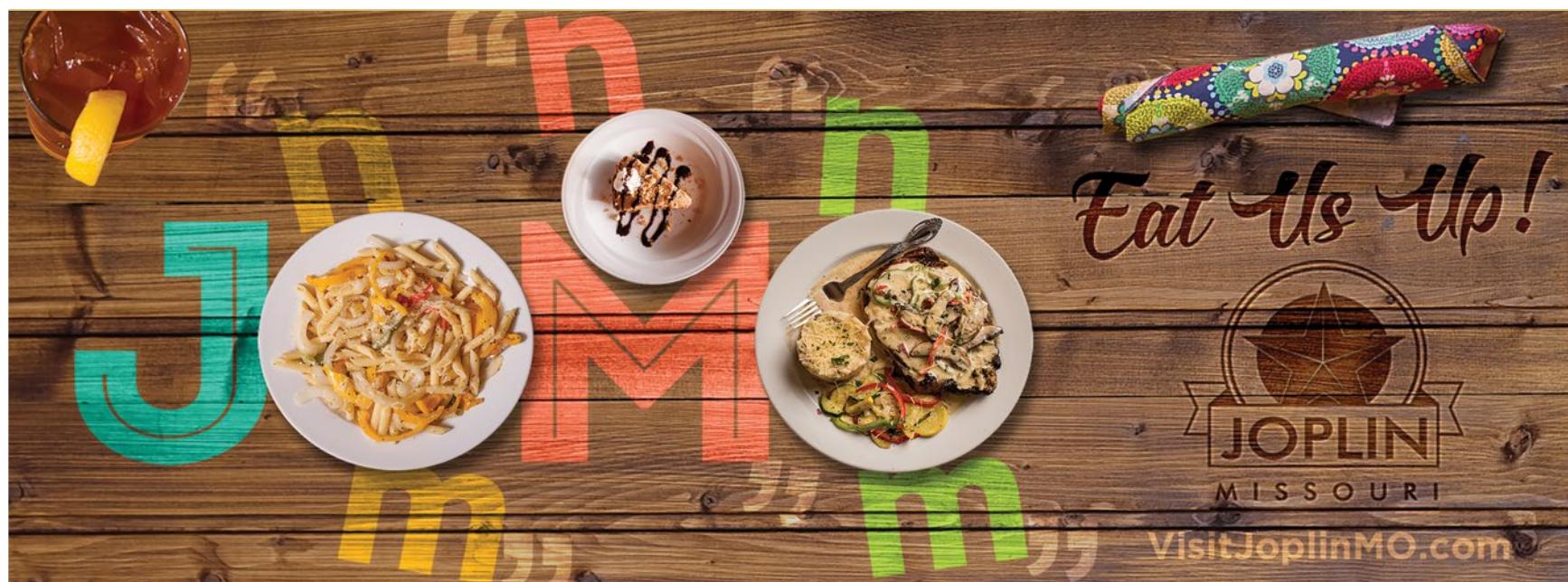
The Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) recently selected David Pyle, principal at Carl Junction High School, as the 2016 Missouri High School Principal of the Year.

MASSP presented the award during the group's annual spring conference at the Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark, in March. Pyle was awarded the recognition based on his impact in the areas of collaborative leadership; curriculum, instruction and assessment; and his personalization of the learning environment.

The selection was made from more than 600 high-school principals from throughout Missouri. Pyle is in his 11th year in administration and has served as the principal at Carl Junction High School for six years.

Pyle received a bachelor's degree in education from Missouri Southern in 1997. He also holds a master's degree from PSU and an educational specialist degree from Southwest Baptist University.

Earlier in his career, as a teacher at Golden City, he was named High School Teacher of the Year.







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SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES



Math team beats top competitors at state competition

Missouri Southern State University achieved a perfect score and tied for first place with Washington University in St. Louis - a traditional powerhouse in the competition, having won 13 of the last 21 contests - during the 21st annual Missouri Collegiate Mathematics Competition, held April 7-8 in St. Joseph.

The winning schools, led by Missouri Southern, included: 3rd Place: Missouri Academy; 4th Place: Washington University in St. Louis; 5th Place: Truman State University; 6th Place: Truman State University; 7th Place: Saint Louis University; 8th Place: William Jewell College

It's a big win, Math Department faculty members say, given the dominance shown by the other institutions over the years. MSSU has never before placed above the top one-third of competitors.

"There has never been a perfect score in the history of the competition," says Dr. Rich Laird, professor of mathematics at MSSU. "This tie is sort of like our football team beating the Chiefs."

The 2016 first-place Missouri Southern State University team consisted of: Andrew Stokes, senior math major; Sam Heil, a dual credit home schooled student; Keith Geller, junior math major.

Grad performs survey of Civil War battle site



When Chris Dukes began a basic archeological survey of the five-acre site near the intersection of Peace Church and Fountain roads north of Joplin, it was intended as an exercise in how the process is done.

"I wanted to go about it in a very systematic manner to prove that I can do the work," says Dukes, who graduated from Missouri Southern in 2013. "But I didn't expect to find anything."

But the more than 50 artifacts he unearthed while working on his master's degree in applied anthropology have helped to strengthen the narrative of what took place there more than 150 years ago – a brutal Civil War battle that rocked Jasper County.

Dukes returned to Missouri Southern this spring to present a program entitled "Unearthing the Past: The Discovery at Sherwood/Rader Farm Civil War Park." He offered a PowerPoint presentation that explained his findings and how they affect the narrative of the battle. He was then joined by area historians for a roundtable discussion.

During two days in May of 1863, the severe brutality of the Civil War became painfully real to the soldiers and residents of western Jasper County. On May 18, members of the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry Regiment and the 2nd Kansas Volunteer Artillery Battery were foraging for food and loading wagons at the Rader farmhouse when they came under attack by 70 men led by Confederate guerrilla leader Thomas Livingston.

Eighteen soldiers were killed in the attack, with many of the bodies mutilated. The following day, Union reinforcements arrived and burned the Rader farm along with the village of Sherwood and other nearby communities.

"Western Jasper County was ripped apart," says Brad Belk, director of the Joplin Museum Complex and president of the Sherwood/Rader Farm Civil War Park Inc. "It became a microcosm of what was going on during a horrible time in our history."

"Chris hit the jackpot with these 57 artifacts he found at the site. It's a game changer for us because it gives greater significance to this property."

Students inducted into new physics honors society

Five students were inducted earlier this semester into the newly formed Sigma Pi Sigma chapter – a first for the university.

An organization of the American Institute of Physics, Sigma Pi Sigma exists to honor outstanding scholarship and encourage interest in physics. Founded in 1921, there are more than 90,000 members.

"This gives students an opportunity to be part of a national organization that offers resources for them such as job placement, service ideas and outreach to the community," said Dr. Marsi Archer, professor of chemical and physical science.

Students inducted into the honors society were: Theresa Botzow, senior physics major, Monett; Marissa Gard, undecided, Lamar; Phillip Kovach, senior chemistry major, Joplin; Kristine Pritchard, senior physics major, Joplin; and Benjamin Starkey, senior physics major, Webb City.

Organizers raising funds for Missouri Shakespeare Festival

A new fundraising push is underway to help support the annual Missouri Shakespeare Festival at Missouri Southern.

Organizers hope to raise \$25,000 in order to provide a stipend for company members, plus assistance with travel, food and lodging for those who need it.

"All along, the backbone of our enterprise has been the willingness of talented people to volunteer their time and energy (to the annual production)," said Dr. Jim Lile, the festival's artistic director. "Our goal is to become a really attractive place for actors to want to come and spend a month."

The festival was launched in 2013 with a production of "Macbeth," continuing in 2014 with "Twelfth Night" and "The Tempest" in 2015. This year's production – planned for June 23-26 – will be "Romeo and Juliet."

To make a gift to the festival, contact the Missouri Southern Foundation at 417-625-9615 or visit www.mssu.edu/advancement/giving/opportunities.php.





THE ROBERT W. PLASTER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



Portfolio management class gives students real-world experience

For students in Dr. Brian Nichols' Portfolio Management course, the classroom experience couldn't get any more hands-on.

"I run the class as a money management firm," said Nichols, professor of business administration. "I'm the portfolio manager. Each student is an analyst and they select an industry or sector to analyze. They give an update on the types of companies in the sector, how they're broken down, major events that have happened, threats and opportunities."

"We go through and screen for stocks, look at price data and decide what we want to buy or sell. It's as hands-on as I can possibly make it."

The class was first offered in 2006, with \$300,000 pulled from the Youngman Portfolio that was endowed to the university. The Plaster School of Business draws a small percentage each year to cover operating expenses.

Nichols said the Standard and Poor 1500 is the benchmark portfolio for his class. In the 10 years the class has been offered, they have kept up with market and, in some years, even beat it.

Today, the class' portfolio balance stands at more than \$413,000.

"What's so neat about this class is that not many schools have a student-managed fund," Nichols said. "So many students have told me that when they go in for job interviews, employers are really interested in this experience that they've had."

Industrial robot system donated to Engineering Technology Department

A state-of-the-art industrial robot system was donated to the Department of Engineering Technology during a special presentation on March 16.

Ross Turner, a Leggett & Platt branch manager, is a member of the Industrial Engineering Technology advisory board. Through his involvement, the Leggett & Platt Automotive Group announced it would donate the brand new industrial robot to Missouri Southern.

"We are thrilled about this donation, which helps the Engineering Technology Department enhance our students' exposure to hands-on applications," said



Dr. Elke Howe, head of the department.

The donation, which will support the university's new minor in automation, came in response to a fundraiser for the Pegasus II Robotic Learning System. A crowdfunding initiative is currently in place to meet a goal of \$4,400 toward the purchase of the \$22,000 system. The remaining cost will be covered by donations from alumni, friends and the university's business partners. 

Team wins second straight NASBITE competition



For the second straight year, students from the Plaster School of Business at Missouri Southern State University have claimed the title in the NASBITE International Student Case Competition.

The five-member team completed a 20-page analysis that involves the Ohio-based Cleveland Whiskey. The small manufacturer is seeking to expand globally, focusing on the Asian market and Singapore in particular. Papers were submitted by teams from 30 universities and then blind reviewed. The top three schools were invited to make a presentation to company representatives during the 29th annual NASBITE International Conference, held April 4-8 in Newport, Rhode Island.

Competing against Missouri Southern in the finals were teams from the University of Northern Iowa and Youngstown State University in Ohio.

"Last year's competition was a market selection case," said Dr. Chris Moos, associate professor of international business and the team's advisor. "Cleveland Whiskey knew where they wanted to go, but wanted to know

how to enter this specific market. They had a budget and asked the teams for their recommendation on naming, branding, pricing, distribution and a timeline.

"This year, there were ideas from all three finalists that Cleveland Whiskey can use, but they felt our numbers were more realistic."

Team members were Holly Loncarich, Josh Foster, Cynthia Salas, Aliza Fahle and Viktoryia Johnson.

As the winning team, the students were presented with a check for \$1,000 by Tom Lix, founder of Cleveland Whiskey.

C-DECA members earn national honors

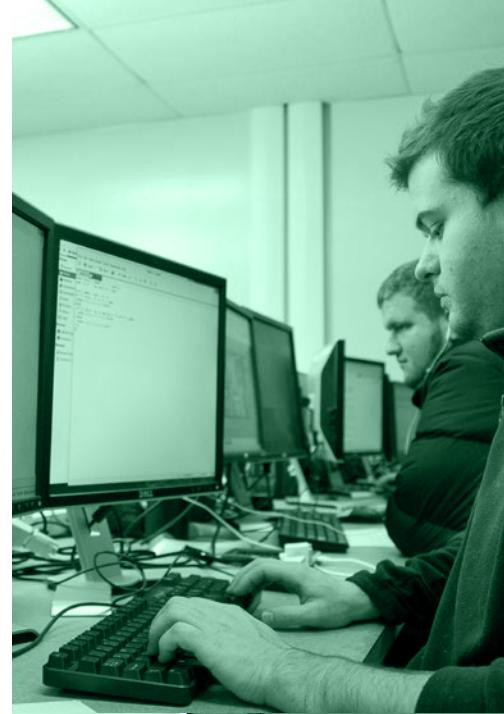


Dillon Walker, who graduated in May with his master's in accountancy, successfully defended his title and won his second straight Collegiate Delta Epsilon Chi (C-DECA) International Accounting Competition title at the 55th annual International Career Development Conference held in Washington, D.C.

C-DECA students participated with more than 1,300 other students in professional development activities, competitive events and management institutes. The MSSU C-DECA contingent was comprised of 11 students who competed in a variety of business-related events.

Awarded alongside Walker was senior Kyle Prisock, who earned a Top 10 finish in the marketing management category.

As part of the trip, Rep. Billy Long and his staff hosted the students in a tour of the White House and the Capitol. Several students were also able to visit the Library of Congress, the Lincoln Memorial and the National Mall as well as other historic sites.





SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



Graduate degrees expand choices for educators

Gina Schultz, a first-grade teacher in Webb City, says she and the late Dr. Al Cade of the School of Education had an ongoing joke: He would ask if she had her master's yet and she would reply she would start as soon as she could work on it at MSSU.

"He let me know on the night of the Teacher of the Year banquet that the graduate program would be available," she remembers.

A member of the first cohort to work on the Master of Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction degree, she received her degree at commencement in May.

"It has been fantastic," Schultz says.

The master's degree is now offered completely online. Students can take six hours per semester and finish 36 hours in six semesters, including two summers.

Dr. Maggie Beachner, coordinator of the teacher education graduate program, says Southern is in the process of revising the curriculum to make it more flexible.

"There will be fewer required courses, and more electives to let students customize the degree according to their own professional interests," she says. "Students will be able to take graduate-level content courses to satisfy the 18 hour dual-credit teaching requirement."

This fall, a new Master of Science in Educational Administration degree program will kick off. It will qualify graduates to register for the Missouri School Leader Performance Assessment (MoSLPA) and the Building-Level Administrator Missouri Content Assessment.

"Several of our graduate instructors are leaders in area schools who can offer real-world practical application opportunities," Beachner says. "The high standards we have implemented will help prepare our students to become exceptionally qualified."

Bringing the real world into the classroom



For Kathy Nicodemus, a fourth-grade teacher at Joplin's Irving Elementary School, her job is not just about sharing knowledge. It's about students learning why that knowledge matters.

After her children entered school, Nicodemus worked as a substitute teacher in Joplin for eight years, teaching in hundreds of classrooms. She decided to obtain a teaching degree and graduated from MSSU in December 2012.

For the last three years, she has taught fourth grade at Irving. She says her focus is to make real-world connections to lessons and subjects.

"One of our math standards is to add and subtract to numbers into the millions. I wondered how I was supposed to communicate the importance of knowing how to do it," she says. "I noticed the digital water bottle savings counter at school. One fountain had kept 10,000 water bottles out of landfills."

Her students soon were creating questions, charts and graphs with data from each of the school's water fountains.

Guest speakers also helped bring the real world into the classroom.

Her father and stepmother brought their rock and mineral collection in from Sedalia. Another teacher's father, a race car driver, spoke about force and motion. A firefighting school student from MSSU talked about his training. A Wyandotte tribe princess taught Native American dances. Nicodemus' husband spoke about food packaging and employee hiring.

A local pizza restaurant provided a discount on uncut pizzas to help students understand fractions.

"I also tell stories," Nicodemus says. "All I have to say is, 'OK, I have a story' and 21 sets of eyes are glued to my forehead like laser beams."

Thesis studies video games, gamers

Callieann Jackson, Neosho, who graduated last May with a bachelor's in psychology, investigated video gaming in her senior research thesis, "The Relationship Between Video Game Type and Eyewitness Memory."

She says her research seems to show that gamers with a more well-rounded selection of games, including puzzle games, role-playing games and action games have the best results because they have more experience in encountering variables.

Her paper cites research and data collected from 60 undergraduates at MSSU. After playing for 20 minutes, participants were given a video questionnaire about the game they played to complete.

Jackson's first hypothesis- that those who played games frequently more often recognized information given to them in a questionnaire – was supported by her on-campus research.

Her paper is currently undergoing further revisions and has been provisionally accepted for publication in the Journal for Psychological Inquiry.

Twenty years strong: Children's Lifetime Wellness Academy

Now in its 20th year, the Children's Lifetime Wellness Academy at Missouri Southern continues to provide a variety of fun, healthy activities for kids.

Designed for children ages 7-12, the day camp is sponsored each June by the Kinesiology Department. "It's a great opportunity to be active, but be free from the concerns of competition," says kinesiology professor Patty Vavra. "No matter what level of ability they come to us with, they get to see themselves improve."

Both indoor and outdoor activities are featured, including bowling, Frisbee, swimming, golf, racquet sports, archery and canoeing. A fee of \$100 per child covers four days of instruction, equipment and a T-shirt.

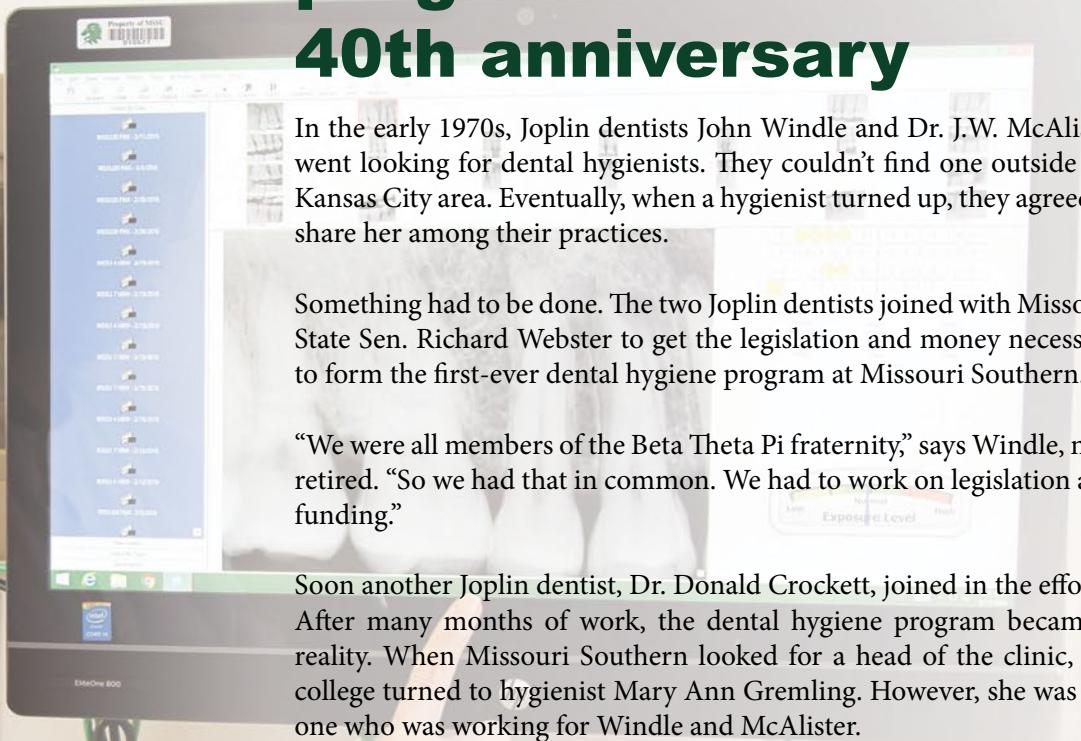
The event also serves as a one-week practicum for Missouri Southern students to get experience teaching children sports and recreational activities.

The camp will be offered June 6-9. For more information, call 417-625-9316 or email Hayes-B@mssu.edu.





SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES



Dental Hygiene program celebrates 40th anniversary

In the early 1970s, Joplin dentists John Windle and Dr. J.W. McAlister went looking for dental hygienists. They couldn't find one outside the Kansas City area. Eventually, when a hygienist turned up, they agreed to share her among their practices.

Something had to be done. The two Joplin dentists joined with Missouri State Sen. Richard Webster to get the legislation and money necessary to form the first-ever dental hygiene program at Missouri Southern.

"We were all members of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity," says Windle, now retired. "So we had that in common. We had to work on legislation and funding."

Soon another Joplin dentist, Dr. Donald Crockett, joined in the effort. After many months of work, the dental hygiene program became a reality. When Missouri Southern looked for a head of the clinic, the college turned to hygienist Mary Ann Gremling. However, she was the one who was working for Windle and McAlister.

"It took us almost a year to get a replacement," Windle recalls with a laugh.

A total of 16 students took part in the first-ever dental hygiene program. As part of training, cleanings and other services were offered to the public at a low cost.

In 1994, Dr. Crockett established the Donald Crockett Fund. The endowment supports the program and its students by providing perpetual funding for student scholarships and program needs.

The MSSU Dental Hygiene program celebrated its 40th anniversary during the 2015-16 school year.

Much has changed in four decades.





Compared to the one clinic 40 years ago, the Dental Hygiene Clinic today is comprised of three clinics – one at the Julio León Health Science Building at MSSU, with two more in Rolla and Sikeston, Mo.

"The growth has been amazing," says Dr. Tia Strait, dean of the School of Health Sciences. "We're really grateful to those local dentists and the people here 40 years ago who saw the need and got it started."

Dr. Stacie Scrivner, chair of the department, says 82 students are enrolled this year – 55 in Joplin, with 17 more at Rolla and 12 at Sikeston.

The three clinics provide dental cleanings, X-rays and other preventive services to children over age 5, students, people with special needs and senior citizens. The cost is \$20 for the public and alumni, and \$10 for MSSU students.

"The lower-income people we wanted to service were not being serviced," Windle says. "Southern is as close to that service as I know how to get." 

Faculty members collaborate on book

Four members of the Missouri Southern faculty have combined forces to produce the book "Respiratory Simulation: 20 Adult Simulations."

The book was written by Glenda Pippin, Sherry Whiteman and Janice Dunaway, Respiratory Therapy, and Caleb Lewis, Simulation Lab.

Also credited as an author is Scot Jones of Broward College.

Published by Respiratory Books of Coral Springs, Fla., the 120-page book includes a series of simulation Q&A exercises and informational charts.

The book is currently in use by students in the School of Health Sciences. It is also available for purchase by programs at other colleges and universities.



Aircraft fly in for Health & Safety Expo

A fly-in by emergency aircraft and a unique obstacle course were among the highlights of the annual Health & Safety Expo, held on campus on April 15 and organized by the EMT/Parademic Department.

The morning began with a session for EMS students that taught them how to coordinate a landing zone for the aircraft. By completing the Student Observation and Ridealong (SOAR) program, students were eligible to ride in the aircraft of observers.

New this year was the Biohazard Games – an obstacle course coordinated by EMS students. Teams had to "rescue" a mannequin, which they then had to transport through a series of obstacles designed by the dental hygiene, nursing and respiratory therapy programs, as well as the Show-Me Gold officer training program. Winning teams received a traveling trophy.

Representatives from area fire and ambulance programs, law enforcement and the military were among the 40 vendors available to meet with students and the community.



Nurse for a Day

Twenty-eight students from area high schools took part in the Nursing Department's first "Nurse for a Day" session Friday, March 18, in the León Health Science Building.

The event's goal was to help students contemplating nursing careers get a closer look at the field. The students participated in four nursing rotations, hearing high-fidelity heart and lung sounds, taking vital signs, monitoring blood pressures and doing simulated blood draws.



LIONS ATHLETICS



Prince, Jones have record seasons



Prince



Jones

The Missouri Southern men's and women's basketball teams once again made it to the MIAA Tournament, where the men fell in the semifinals and the women in the quarters.

Senior guard Taévaunn Prince was a unanimous first-team All-MIAA pick, while also earning first-team All-Region and first-team All-American honors. This season, he led Division II in scoring, free throws made and attempted, while ranking fifth in total points, 11th in defensive rebounds, 15th in rebounds per game and 19th in total rebounds. Prince led the MIAA in seven different categories.

Prince finished his career holding the MSSU single-season (26.4) and career record for scoring average (21.4), while also holding the MSSU and MIAA record for free throws made (273). His 1,303 career points are the most ever by a two-year player at the university.

On the women's side, senior guard Shareese Jones was a first-team All-MIAA pick this year and joined the 1,000-point club on Nov. 24. She finished her career as the fourth-leading scorer in MSSU history with 1,421 points, and was fifth in career rebounds (651), and second in career free throw percentage (.824).



Corn

Corn inducted into Hall of Fame

Former Missouri Southern men's basketball coach and current Director of Development for Athletics Robert Corn was recently inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame.

Corn coached the Missouri Southern men's basketball program for 25 seasons, compiling a 413-305 record before retiring in March 2014. His 413 wins are the most in school history. He also has the third-most wins among coaches in the history of the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association. He has led the Lions to 16 consecutive trips to the MIAA Tournament, 21 overall, and in 2014 earned his fourth MIAA Coach of the Year award. That award followed his ninth 20-win season.

Overall, Corn guided five teams to the NCAA Division II Tournament. One of his best seasons was 1999-2000, when the Lions reached the national semifinals and finished 30-3. That team cut down the nets three times inside the Leggett & Platt Athletic Center - after the MIAA regular-season championship, the MIAA Tournament championship and the NCAA Division II South Central Regional Tournament title.

Corn joins Pat Lipira, Rod Smith, Tom Rutledge and Warren Turner as former Missouri Southern athletes or coaches in the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame. He was inducted into the Missouri Southern Hall of Fame in 2000.



Track and field athletes earn All-American honors

The Missouri Southern men's and women's track and field teams recently sent 10 individuals to the 2016 NCAA Division II Indoor Track and Field Championships in Pittsburg, Kan.

Six of those student athletes came away with All-American performances, while Jayce Thomas earned All-American honors in multiple events.

Thomas finished fourth in the heptathlon to earn All-American honors, while also placing eighth in the high jump to be named All-American. During the season, Thomas was the MIAA Indoor Track and Field Championships High Point Winner, while scoring an MSSU school record of 5,615 points in the event. That point total is the fourth-highest ever in Division II history.

Sophomore Kennan Harrison was an All-American as well; the Carthage native finished seventh in the triple jump.

On the women's side, the Lions had two All-Americans in the pole vault, including the national runner-up Melanie Bower. Bower placed second in the event, while freshman Emily Presley was eighth.

Kaylee Morgan had an impressive day in the long jump as she earned All-American honors and set a new school record in the process. Morgan leaped to a mark of 20-02.25 to place third overall. She is the only women in MSSU Track and Field history to jump beyond 20 feet in the long jump.

Emily Harris earned her second-straight All-American honor in the mile as the junior finished seventh in the

finals of the event. She is the school record holder in the women's mile.

In other news, women's head coach Patty Vavra, an MSSU alum and Athletics Hall of Fame member, announced her retirement after 22 years in the position. She will continue to teach in the Kinesiology Department, while Bryan Schiding, the men's coach, will take the reins of both programs next season.



Softball complex dedicated to Pat Lipira

A ribbon cutting and dedication for the Pat Lipira Softball Complex was held on April 3.

Lipira was the Missouri Southern softball coach from 1982-2000. She compiled a record of 632-275 during this period, guiding the Lions to six NCAA Regional appearances, four MIAA Championships and the NCAA National Championship in 1992. She was a five-time MIAA Coach of the Year, two-time Regional Coach of the Year and National Coach of the Year in 1992.

Nineteen years after beginning her coaching duties, she stepped down to take on the duties of head of the Department of Kinesiology, and later accepted the post of vice president for academic affairs. She retired in 2015.

"This is an honor that's a long time coming for an individual who has meant so much to this university," said Jared Bruggeman, director of athletics.



BASKETBALL CAMPS

WOMEN'S CAMPS



2016 YOUNG PLAYERS INDIVIDUAL CAMP

June 20 - 22

Entering Grades: 4th - 8th, Girls

Check-In: 2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m., Day 1

Check-Out: 5:00 p.m., Day 3

Resident: \$230 per Camper

Commuter: \$180 per Camper

2016 SHOOTING CAMP

June 23

Entering Grades: 4th - 12th, Girls

Check-In: 8:30 a.m.

Time: 9:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Cost: \$80 | Includes Lunch

2016 HIGH SCHOOL DAY CAMP

June 26

Entering Grades: 9th - 12th, Girls

Check-In: 12:00 p.m.

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Cost: \$50 per Camper

HIGH SCHOOL TEAM CAMP

June 27 - 29

Who: Varsity, JV, Freshman & Junior High Girls Teams

Check-In: 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Day 1

Check-Out: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Day 3

Commuter Team - Full Payment: \$600 per Team

Commuter Team - Deposit: \$300 per Team

Resident Team - Deposit: \$300 per Team

*All teams must be registered separately.

**If choosing deposit, remainder will be due before camp check-in.

To register: <http://www.mssuwomensbasketballcamps.com/>

MEN'S CAMPS

INDIVIDUAL CAMP- CONTESTS, GAMES, 3 VS. 3

June 13-14

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Grades 3-9

Cost: | \$100

OFFENSIVE SKILLS CAMP- HANDLING,
SHOOTING, 1 ON 1 MOVES

June 15-16

Grades 3-6 from 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Grades 7-9 from 1 – 3:30 p.m.

Cost: | \$50

Both Camps | \$125

To register call Jeff Boschee- 417-625-9788 or email him at Boschee-J@mssu.edu



MSSULIONS.COM

CLASS NOTES

1970s

Jhan R. Hurn, '74, is the President/CEO of Community Support Services in Joplin, Mo.

Kent Eastman, '75, was recognized by the National Association of Realtors with Realtor Emeritus Status, for holding 40 cumulative years of membership in the association and in recognition of valuable and lasting contribution to the real estate profession in the community.

Glen "Harvey" Derrick, '77, released a vinyl album, "Dreams on the Line," on CdBaby.com.

Robert Corn, '78, was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame on Jan. 31, 2016. Corn coached the Missouri Southern men's basketball program for 25 seasons, compiling a 413-305 record before retiring in March 2014.

1980s

Anita (Rank) Oplotnik, '88, a four-year letter winner at Missouri Southern, a two-time All-American selection and a two-time first team NAIA All-District selection, was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame as 2015 Filbert Five Honoree. Oplotnik serves on the MSSU Board of Governors.

Greg Arend, '82, partner for Deloitte & Touche, was named a Man of Distinction by the Tulsa Business & Legal News.

Deborah Durham, '84, is the director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority. She is the 2015 recipient of the Christian Petersen Design Award presented by the Iowa State University College of Design.

1990s

Cyndi (Evans) Cogbill, '90, received the 2015 Fellow/Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Interpretation, Region 6.

Michele Dunker, '91, is a kindergarten teacher at Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School in Joplin, Mo.

David Israels-Swenson, '92, is the director of student activities, conferences and events at the University of Minnesota Morris in Morris, Minn.

Autumn Dawn Lawrence-Palmer, '97, was a 2015 finalist for the State of Missouri Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

John Wales, '97, is a program manager at Turbine Engine Consultants Inc. in Joplin, Mo.

Kelly Avise, '99, was named a 2016 Golden Key Winner at the Carthage Chamber of Commerce dinner.

Melodee Colbert-Kean, '99, was named the president of the National League of Cities during the annual Congress of Cities Exposition held in Nashville, Tenn., in November.

2000s

Brad Cornelsen, '00, is the offensive coordinator for Virginia Tech Football Team in Blacksburg, Va.

Derick White, '06, was cast as the lead character, Ren McCormack, in the stage production of "Footloose." This production will be staged in Dallas, Texas.

Josiah Roelfsema, '07, is a math teacher at Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School in Joplin, Mo.

Lesley (Collins) Vanvolkinburg, '07, is the executive director of the Osteopathic Medical Education Consortium of Oklahoma at the Oklahoma State University's University Center for Health Sciences.

Derek Lahm, '08, was selected by the Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals as the 2015 New Principal of the Year. The award is presented annually to a principal who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in their school, their region and at the state level. The winner will have demonstrated their enthusiasm by support from students, parents, teachers and peers.

Clayton Carnahan, '09, is the track and field, cross country and scholar bowl coach at Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School in Joplin, Mo.

2010s

Kimberly (Shank) Reed, '10, competed in the Olympic Marathon trials held in Los Angeles in February.

Vera Joseph, '13, teaches French at Thomas Jefferson Independent Day School in Joplin, Mo.

Cassie Hutchison, '11, is working for the NASCAR Foundation in Daytona, Fla.

LION CUBS

Samuel Hydar, '13, and Ashley Trotne, '12, welcomed son, **Jasper Michael**, on Dec. 21, 2015.

Keifer, '96, and Shawna Thompson welcomed their first son, **Rigney Cooper** on January 24, 2016.

Mariun Price, '11, and Hannah Edwards welcomed baby **Tyran Dallas**, on February 24, 2016.

IN MEMORIAM

Joplin Junior College

William F. Hoffman
Oct. 26, 2015

Phillip Bellairs
Oct. 29, 2015

Roger Hankins
Nov. 25, 2015

Jeanne Fanning
Nov. 26, 2015

Jeanette L. Gardner Foster Keckley, '40
Jan. 1, 2016

Rita Galbraith, '94
Dec. 21, 2015

Dr. William Stevens
School of Business,
1988-2011
Dec. 24, 2015

Mary Lou Dove
Librarian, 1969-98
Jan. 6, 2016

David L. Rice, '13
Jan. 9, 2016

Paul Kern, '75
Jan. 10, 2016

Steven P. Riley, '79
Jan. 12, 2016

Jo Ann Niccum Johnson
Jan. 16, 2016

Thomas L. Broadway
Jan. 21, 2016

Clarence "Dwayne" Jeffries, '74
Jan. 28, 2016

Susan L. (Hull) Beeler, '80
Jan. 28, 2016

Shiloh Sonis, '14
Feb. 4, 2016

Craig D. Abernathy, '88
Feb. 9, 2016

Aaron J. Eidem, '10
Feb. 18, 2016

Friends of Missouri Southern

Neil R. Smith, Sr.
Nov. 13, 2015

Diana J. Winder
Nov. 14, 2015

Robert T. Ogle, '91
Nov. 21, 2015

John Braeckel
Nov. 24, 2015

Donald L. Crites, '91
Dec. 2, 2015

Elizabeth (Betty) A. Rosiere, '70
Dec. 12, 2015

Susan K. Caldwell, '87
Dec. 16, 2015

Marjorie Workizer
Nov. 2, 2015

Charles O. Cossey
Nov. 6, 2015

Jack L. Stults
Nov. 11, 2015

Phillip J. Thamert, Sr.
Feb. 8, 2016

James L. Glass
Feb. 13, 2016

Lawrence Hickey, Jr.
Feb. 17, 2016

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION, ADMINISTRATION

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COURSEWORK, STUDENTS WILL BE ELIGIBLE
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SKY HIGH

Dr. Albert Yeboah-Forson teams with students for study of mining areas



Yeboah-Forson

The video begins with a view of blacktop before the drone whirs to life, making a gradual ascent until it presents a 360-degree look at a desolate landscape.

It's an area that appears more suited to location filming for the next "Mad Max" entry than serving as a place where people would want to live. Which is precisely why it was selected for study.

Dr. Albert Yeboah-Forson, an assistant professor of geophysics, teamed with then-mechanical engineering major Kush Bhakta

during the fall for a project that involved using a drone to scout area mining remediation sites for further study.

The pair reviewed government, academic and archive literature from the Joplin Museum Complex for ideas on areas to study, as well as archival photos to use for comparison.

They collected videos and still images from areas in Southwest Missouri, Southeast Kansas and Northeast Oklahoma – the Tri-State district where lead and zinc were heavily mined starting in the late 1800s.

"We wanted to know how far these former mining locations have gotten in terms of remediation," says Forson. "Typically, we would do that by collecting water and soil samples, but we have limited resources."

The aerial findings have been grouped into three areas – incomplete remediation, successful remediation and unsuccessful remediation. Data collected during the study will hopefully prove useful to the communities being looked at, he says. It will be used to find problem areas and suggest ways for further remediation.

Bhakta gave a presentation on the project during the American Geophysical Union's fall meeting, held Dec. 14-18 in San Francisco, Calif.

The event included around 1,800 presentations on a variety of scientific topics, workshops and networking opportunities. The Presidential Forum featured Elon Musk, CEO and lead designer at Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX) and the co-founder of Tesla Motors. It also marked the first time a student from Missouri Southern has presented at the AGU's annual meeting.

"It's the biggest conference in terms of geophysics," says Forson. "It gave him some exposure and a chance to meet experts in the field."

While the drone portion of the study has been completed, Forson says the project is far from over.

"The first part of this study was the drone component," he says. "I'll be working with two students this summer to identify locations for a chemistry analysis."





CULTURAL CALENDAR

ALL EVENTS FREE UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED 2016

JUNE

June 6

First Four-Week and Eight-Week Sessions begin

June 7 & June 8

Southern Welcome
12 - 5 p.m.
BSC - MSSU
Contact 417-625-9354

June 9

Film: How to Train Your Dragon
2:30 and 6:30 p.m.
Phelps Theater

June 20-25

Shakespeare Academy
MSSU campus
\$150 charge
(Some scholarships available)
For information, visit:
www.mssu.edu/moshakes

June 22 & June 23

Southern Welcome
12 - 5 p.m.
BSC - MSSU
Contact 417-625-9354

June 23 - 26

Missouri Shakespeare Festival
"Romeo & Juliet"
7:30 p.m. (June 23 - 25)
2:30 p.m. (June 26)
Bud Walton Theatre
Tickets: \$10

June 24

36th Joplin PoPs Concert
Warrensburg Community Band
8 p.m., MSSU Oval
\$10 adults/children under 12 free
Contact 417-625-1822

JULY

July 5

Second Four-Week
Summer Session begins

July 11-14

2016 Jazz Camp
Grades 6-12
All Instruments
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
\$150 through May 27
\$175 through July 11
Final Recital: July 14 @ 6 p.m.
To register:
Download registration
form at www.mssu.edu/jazz

July 12 & July 13

Southern Welcome
12 - 5 p.m.
BSC - MSSU
Contact 417-625-9354

July 14

Film: How to Train Your Dragon 2
2:30 and 6:30 p.m.
Phelps Theater

July 28

End of Summer Semester

AUGUST

August 18

Southern Welcome
12 - 5 p.m.
BSC - MSSU
Contact 417-625-9354

August 22

Fall Semester begins

SEPTEMBER

September 10

Home Football Opener
vs. Missouri Western
6 p.m.
Fred G. Hughes Stadium

September 15

Missouri Southern Sponsors
Third Thursday
6 p.m.
Downtown Joplin

September 24

2016 Football
Hall of Fame Game
6 p.m.
Fred G. Hughes Stadium

**Mark Your Calendar for
HOMECOMING 2016!
Friday and Saturday, Oct. 7-8, 2016**



FOLLOW US!



GETTING SOCIAL



Missouri Southern State University

"My parents always said, 'Give credit where credit is due,' and I really owe it to my psychology professors.

"I feel like I have been part of a family here at Southern ... an academic family. My professors have gone above and beyond to help me with whatever I have needed. After Southern, I want to apply for graduate schools and PhD programs. I can't thank my instructors enough for helping me.

"Any future success I have, I feel like I owe the majority of it to them, as well as my parents. I'm a transfer student, and I feel like my education here at Southern is better than anything I could have gotten anywhere else."

Staci Sontag
Senior
Psychology major, business minor

#PeopleOfMOSO

 Mike Palmer Your MSSU psychology degree will take you as far as you want to go. Mine has served me well. And I can honestly say that I apply the lessons I learned there on a daily basis. Congratulations, and good fortune in your next steps.

Like · Reply · Message ·  2 · April 7 at 11:34pm

 Staci Sontag Thank you for your kind words. They are so appreciated.

Like · Reply · Message · 9 hrs

 Mike Palmer Thank you for representing my alma mater with distinction. MSSU psychology is truly a hidden jewel that we were all privileged to discover.

Like · Reply · Message · 9 hrs

#Shoutouts



NationalHistoryDayMO
@nhdmo



[Follow](#)

Thanks to @mosolions for sponsoring the @twitter contest today! @nhdmo students had a great time. #MOSOHistoryDay

{ thank you }



U.S. Rep. Billy Long [@USRepLong](#)



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My LA Tanner Warbinton & @BrandonW_66 are both proud #Joplin @mosolions graduates



#LionLove



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mosolions She said yes! Congratulations DJ and Tristant! #sweetproposal #winning #HePutARingOnIt
deidra_ritchhart
triples_20 [@leahhuyard](#)



#FutureLions



Maria Rodriguez
@mariardgz25



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Just read an email that I have received my first scholarship for @mosolions!! Thank you and so excited to start my Junior year there!



Allie Tooley
@tools2397



[Following](#)

@mosolions got my acceptance letter today! Here I come Joplin



Kayla Gearhart
@Kayla_Gear



[Follow](#)

Excited to be attending @mosolions in the fall. August can not come fast enough! #futurelion

#ShowingSupport

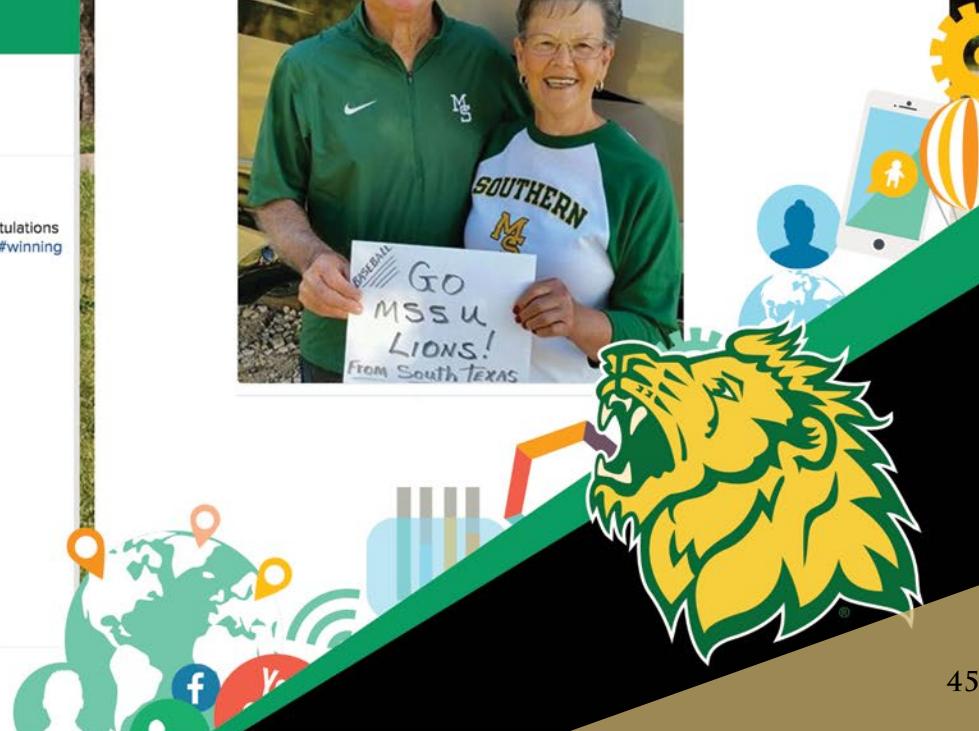


Michelle Moeller
@micmoe



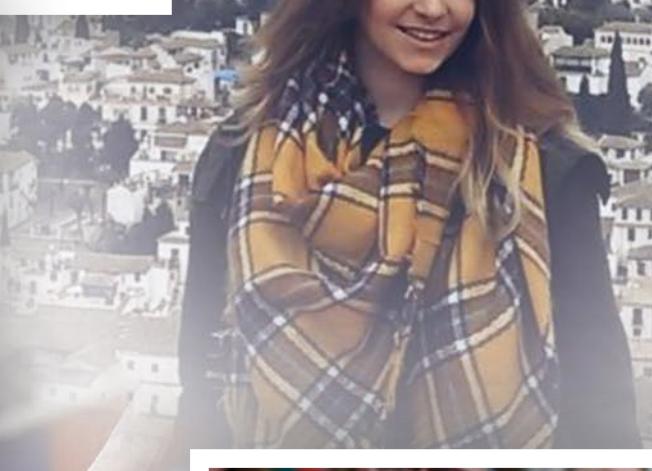
[Following](#)

Good Luck wishes from @trentmoe grandparents for @MSSUBaseball Opening Day. All the way from South TX.



Caught on Camera

Enjoying special moments
with members of our Lion family





Why I Give

Mike and Bre LaFerla



When Mike LaFerla graduated from Missouri Southern State University with a degree in biology in 1989, it was only the beginning of the Joplin orthodontist's relationship with his alma mater.

He received his DDS from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and his master's in orthodontics and craniofacial biology before returning to Joplin to open his own practice 20 years ago – LaFerla Ortho.

"After I got back from doing my doctorate and residency, the first connection I made with Missouri Southern was getting involved with the Alumni Association," he said. "I served on the board and after that, I was asked to serve on the Lionbackers board."

Over the years, he has also served on various committees, attended countless sporting events with his family and even sponsored university events. He has also played an integral role in fundraising efforts such as the Lion Icon statue and now the Reynolds Hall renovation project.

Giving back to his alma mater, whether through campus service or fundraising, is something he feels strongly about.

"I think Missouri Southern is an integral part of our community," said LaFerla. "I got a great education when I was in college. Now I'm back here and some of my employees, friends' children and colleagues are getting an education there. I think it's important to stress our local schools."



3950 East Newman Road
Joplin, Missouri 64801

SAVE THE DATE

HOME COMING

OCTOBER 7-8, 2016



Missouri Southern
personalized plates are a great
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MSSU!



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